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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQ: FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE U.S.  
INVASION; SAO PAULO

11. "The Costs Of The Adventure"

Liberal, largest national circulation daily Folha de S. Paulo editorialized (3/20): "The US invasion in Iraq was a humanitarian catastrophe and a political fiasco that placed the Pentagon in a situation without prospect of solution. It has also been a financial disaster.... The bill totals today USD 600 billion and continues to increase. According to Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz, the adventure may cost USD 4 trillion or more, depending on how long the occupation lasts.... The bill has helped the dollar's increasing devaluation, and this has made it difficult to fight the credit crisis in the US in addition to worsening its global consequences. Nothing indicates that the next US president, regardless of who he/she may be, will have a means to end the adventure. Barack Obama suggested that he might withdraw the troops by 2009. This is of course the best scenario. The problem is that in Iraq the best scenario never comes true."

12. "Five Years Later, The US Has Nothing To Celebrate"

Business-oriented Valor Economico editorialized (3/20): "Iraq was easy to occupy, but has become a hell to remain in, as the 4,000 deaths and 30,000 injured among US troops show. The US has so far spent USD 500 billion in Iraq - the equivalent to one year of [Brazilian] GDP.... Stability means the end of violence, but it is far from happening.... Iraq is far from patterns of normalcy, even when considering the unstable Middle East. Bush's policy was rejected around the world and even by the Americans. The US presidential elections may change ways to reach peace in Iraq. Militarily, however, it is very unlikely that the US troops will leave that nation if Barack Obama or Hillary Clinton, who suggested a withdrawal in the short run, is elected. But it is certain that the US's presence in Iraq will be extended for many years more if the winner is John McCain. Bush's policy in Iraq was a bloody sample of the unilateral strategy dictated by the neoconservatives. His idea of transforming Iraq into a democratic showcase aimed at initiating changes towards that direction throughout the Middle East was an insane authoritarian farce."

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